

Letters to the Editor

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Without the CIA

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Is it not time a few basic questions were asked about the theory and practice of CIA operations in the context of today's world?

The theory assumes the inevitable continuation for at least a generation of something called a "cold war" (occasionally, presumably, boiling) between something called "communism" (the bad guys) and "capitalism" (the good guys — presumably us and those for us). The theory seems to be supported by such powerful influences upon our imagination as *James Bond*, *Uncle*, and the *Penkovsky Papers*, not to mention the "Scientific - Industrial - Military Complex" — which should be called the "Scientific - Industrial - Military-Intelligence Complex."

The practice involves the investment of a considerable volume of resources into the theory, according to many press reports a much larger volume of men and money than are provided for the State Department, one of whose frustrating tasks it is to try to erode the forces that go into the cold war.

A frequently expounded and exploited theory of "intelligence" is the McCarthyist assumption that virtually all pieces of data from suspicious-looking sources are of potential significance and must be shoveled into the maw of "in-

intelligence analysis." This is a strange monster staffed with individuals who likely do not have direct working familiarity with the sources and their context, but who have demonstrated considerable ingenuity in being able to put together strangely diverse pieces of information into a fascinating mosaic that appears to make sense, particularly to individuals without an immediate and intimate working knowledge of the subject matter. It is in this way that the last few Presidents have been consistently bombarded with persistent reports of the threat of "communism" in virtually every country in the world today.

One might question whether, if a comparable volume of resources were invested in documenting the opposite, the results might not be as voluminous and convincing, but with less impact upon presidential and congressional susceptibility to domestic cold war pressures.

Would it be the *reductio ad absurdum* to suggest that one way of moving toward peace, disarmament, balance of payments improvement and global prosperity might be to work toward the dismantling of CIA and its replacement by more legitimate information-gathering operations?

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